

Shining the light on Duxbury's past

DR&HS meetinghouse dig results show unique construction

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They were always there, hints about Duxbury's past, hidden just a few inches in the dirt.

Last fall, the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society led an archeological dig on Chestnut Street with the aim of conclusively proving where the town's second meetinghouse was located.

The dig was a success, and

Craig Chartier of the Plymouth Archeology Rediscovery Project presented the findings to a packed house in the King Caesar barn Thursday morning.

Chartier and DR&HS Executive Director Patrick Browne thanked the over 150 people who showed up at the dig site to volunteer.

"We were stunned at how many volunteers we got,"

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Sharing their knowledge

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different paths as lecturers, funded by different grants: He, at the Kazan Humanitarian University, and she at the Kazan State Medical University. But there is a thread of community that runs through their work, and will tie them together both in Russia and at home.

The Donnellys have been given Fulbright scholarships, the country's most prestigious international educational exchange programs. Among a host of academic experiences listed on the couple's professional resumes, Brian Donnelly is a visiting professor at the University of Texas who specializes in community colleges (he was recently the president of Fisher College) and Eileen heads the graduate nursing programs at Jacksonville University.

Eileen first caught wind of a Fulbright opportunity through an e-mail circulating at the college. Although her initial project didn't come to fruition, eventually she learned of an opportunity in Russia.

"I saw something that really suited Brian," she said.

Brian Donnelly's work involves working with community colleges both on a national and an international level. Some of the work he'll be doing in Kazan relates to the Bologna process, an educational initiative involving 56 countries. The Bologna process is attempting to standardize the community college system, so a degree from a school in Iceland means the same as a degree in Romania.

He said Russia is behind in many ways, and does not have a community college system the way we do in America. However, they're interested in building such a system that Russian officials hope will help students bridge the gap to larger universities.

"There's an education reform initiative that's been going on for years," he said. "They're trying to see if they can take advantage of the community college system."

Both Donnellys are traveling as lecturers, rather than researchers. They will be sharing their knowledge with others, trying to create programs that will help the residents of Kazan in their daily lives.

"It's more about helping people to generate questions, while having some insights as to what has worked," said Brian.

For her part, Eileen Donnelly will be working to help strengthen the country's nursing program. Specifically, she'll be training nurses to go

out into the more rural areas of the country and practice preventive medicine — keeping people out of the hospitals. She said for a modern country, Russia's health care system is years behind America's.

"Since the fall of the Soviet Union they've been in disarray," she said. She referenced a European report called "Health In Transition" that points out many of the deficiencies in the Russian health system. In Kazan, she said, the average lifespan is 58.5 years.

"Educating, training these people, maintaining their health will keep them living longer," she said.

"It's dazzling to me," added Brian. "They're sending people to the moon, but there's a lot of economic need." The area is underdeveloped educationally as well, as the unemployment rate is extremely high, he said.

Some of the subjects Eileen Donnelly will be tackling include promoting healthy lifestyles, nursing leadership and infection control. Some of

these programs are similar to ones she fostered while on the Duxbury Board of Health for nine years, such as blood pressure clinics.

"My focus in healthcare is in the community," she said. "It's about trying to get to that basic individual ... getting into a family and saying how do we help you."

In fact, both husband and wife feel a strong connection to the community aspect of their work.

"I came into community colleges through the community door," said Brian. He was community organizer and worked on a grassroots level before entering the classroom.

"They're sending people to the moon, but there's a lot of economic need."

— Brian Donnelly

"Community college has given me a vehicle on another level, to help reach out."

Brian Donnelly said he has already been communicating with people in Russia via the Internet video-conferencing service Skype. He is hoping that the work he and his wife do in Kazan will help build trust between the two countries.

"We hope to establish relationships in a way that we can remove some of the suspicions, and, in some way, have an impact," he said.

The couple will be in Russia for four months. At the end of the trip, they hope to do some traveling. It's unusual, Eileen Donnelly said, for a husband and wife to be on a Fulbright trip together. She was initially supposed to be in Moscow (and they will both visit the capital at some point during their visit) but in the end it made more sense to be in the same location.

"We'll come together in the evening and say 'what did you do today, hon?'" she said.

The Fulbright Program was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by then-Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, according to the organization's Web site fulbright.state.gov. The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Approximately 294,000 "Fulbrighters," 111,000 from the United States and 183,000 from other countries, have participated in the Program since its inception more than sixty years ago. The Fulbright Program awards approximately 7,500 new grants annually. Currently, the Fulbright Program operates in over 155 countries worldwide.